



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

December 23, 2019

The Honorable Kamala Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: S. 2882 (Harris) – As Introduced November 18, 2019 – Support

Dear Senator Harris:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support S. 2882, the *Wildfire Defense Act*, which would establish a community wildfire defense grant program for communities in high-risk wildfire areas.

San Bernardino County has experienced numerous devastating wildfires throughout its history, including the 1980 Panorama Fire, which burned nearly 30,000 acres, the 2003 Grand Prix and Old Fires, which burned a total of 158,000 acres, destroyed more than 1,100 homes and resulted in six deaths, and the 2016 Blue Cut Fire which torched 36,000 acres and 105 homes, as well as countless other fires of several thousands of acres each.

Based on the County's historical experience, the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, in partnership with other agencies, has implemented many of the strategies outlined in S. 2888, including Community Wildfire Defense Plans, defensible space requirements and robust maintenance of evacuation routes, in addition to other measures. County fire mostly uses grants to provide funding for all of this activity. It is an ongoing process as the San Bernardino National Forest is the most densely populated forest in the nation. If there were federal funding available under S. 2882 that would take the place of grants on a regular basis, the County could do miracles with that type of backing. Mountain communities are actively involved in preparation and planning for wildfires with emergency responders. Indeed, due to extensive planning and community buy-in, more than 80,000 mountain residents were efficiently and safely evacuated during the Old Fire.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ROBERT A. LOVINGOOD
First District

JANICE RUTHERFORD
Second District

DAWN ROWE
Third District

CURT HAGMAN
Chairman, Fourth District

JOSIE GONZALES
Vice Chair, Fifth District

Gary McBride
Chief Executive Officer

Given the wildfire tragedies of recent years, federal funding to communities for planning and implementation of Community Wildfire Defense Plans is an essential and prudent investment that will save lives, and improve the resiliency of communities at risk.

For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino supports S. 2882. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,



Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chair, Board of Supervisors



Dawn Rowe
Third District Supervisor
Board of Supervisors

cc: San Bernardino County Federal Delegation